SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN • JULY-AUGUST 1945

THE SCHOOL'S NEW PROGRAM

By Douglas MacAgy

The new program of the California School of Fine Arts has been planned carefully to accommodate the interests of students who will take part in the affairs of a changed world. While it is true that schools always must keep alert to changing circumstances in the environment for which they train their students, the greatly accelerated change caused by the war presents a special challenge.

Art schools in particular, which ideally cultivate the prescient attitudes of the mind more directly than most other institutions, face increased responsibilities at this time. That liberty which is sometimes called freedom of the spirit is a vital condition of the artist. The war and its implicit conflict of ideologies has brought home to the people at large the fact that such liberty is a vital condition of everyone. As there has not been for many years, there is now a potential sympathy between the artist and the community. It is too new to be acknowledged commonly; it is too soon to know whether it will develop or languish. But if we are to take advantage of this one positive outcome of the otherwise catastrophic period through which we have come, bold and positive action must be taken by the educational institutions which claim to foster and promote these liberties.

Too frequently in the past the art schools of this country have not prepared students to take their place in existing community affairs. Or else too often they have trained students to cope with common community standards at the expense of imaginative freedom. The immediate challenge is to find some means by which the separate evils may be dissolved, and surely the time has not for years been more opportune.

This school's new program is designed to prepare the student to take his place as an artist in the community. He will begin with comprehensive studies which in time become specialized in accordance with the field of his choice. All students will gain a first-hand experience of design through work in many mediums, and a knowledge of design in relation to cultural beliefs and social structures. All students will engage in collaborative projects through which they will plan and construct useful community units under the direct advice of practicing architects, painters, weavers, etc. Throughout all courses they will be kept in constant contact with experts in the profession for which they are being trained. Each student will have the opportunity of enrolling in specialized courses under one of two departments: Design for Commerce and Industry, or Painting, Sculpture, Graphic Arts. Complete courses under the full schedule will take three years, with an optional post-graduate year.

The program starts with a faculty of fourteen, to which new members will be added as advanced courses are introduced. This fall all prerequisite courses to special studies in painting, sculpture, lithography, advertising art, illustration, packaging, and industrial design are in operation. In addition, a number of advanced courses carry forward the studies of the many continuing students.

In addition to the regular curriculum, the school will offer special evening lectures and brief courses. These are designed to bring into focus current issues in the arts. At present, the school plans to present lectures by Man Ray, Charles Howard, Salvador Dali. Georges Lemaitre, Professor of French at Stanford University and author of "From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature," will give a six lecture course.

The program is systematically planned, but it is kept flexible so that account may be taken of any unforeseen development of interest and importance to the student body.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors, at its meeting on May 10th, elected new members to the San Francisco Art Association as follows: Active artist members — Adrienne Bonn, Hal Goldman, Merlin Hardy, Peter Lowe, Mildred Pommer. Associate artist members —Mary King Brugheli, Ruth M. Burke, Robert McChesney, Horace B. Trace. Lay members — Alma Carlisle and Lewis B. Reynolds.

SUMMER SESSION REPORT

By James McCray

The California School of Fine Arts has just completed its most successful wartime Summer Session. The plan of an expanded session, which included 14 classes and 13 instructors, proved worth while. All classes were well attended. William Gaw's night class and James McCray's day class enrolled more than thirty students each. Innovations in the 1945 summer program included an expanded advertising art class, a day ceramics class and a jewelry craft class, all of which proved highly stimulating and successful. The children's class produced charming and vivacious work, which has been honored with an exhibition at the University of California Art Department. Other work of the children's class is at the moment hanging in the north cloister at the school.

The increase in enrollment over 1944 was almost 50 per cent. Total enrollment was 258, with 118 in day classes and 140 in night classes and some persons attending both day and night.

On the whole the students had an energetic and imaginative spirit this year in marked contrast to 1944, a result, perhaps, of the end of the European war and the realization that we are beginning a new era.

MONTALVO CONCERTS

So keen was the enjoyment of capacity audiences at the series of sonata recitals by Adolph Baller and Roman Totenberg at the Montalvo Foundation during July that numerous requests were forthcoming that the series be extended. As a result, Anne Dodge Bailhache, Director of the Montalvo Foundation, arranged two additional recitals. These were presented on August 19th and 26th. Request numbers were given consideration in arranging these programs.

ART IN COAST GUARD

The artist's pen has done much to capture the intensity, the depth, the startling phenomenon that is war. Combat drawings and paintings—made at the very scene of action—with this credit line, "By a Coast Guard combat artist," have won an enviable place in the huge and varied collection of war paintings for the Coast Guard, oldest commissioned service in the nation, which on August 4th observed its 155th birthday.

Not the least renowned Coast Guard artist is Chief Petty Officer Norman Thomas, former Pulitzer prize winner, whose stark sketches — particularly of the wounded — have won for him high praise from art critics throughout the country. Coast Guardsman Thomas, who earlier in the war had served in Greenland and had illustrated in his painting the destruction of a clandestine German radio station, has recently returned to the United States from duty aboard a Coast Guard-manned attack transport.

Survivor of an attack upon his ship by a Japanese suicide plane, Thomas helped care for his wounded shipmates, and then, even as invasion landing progressed, worked steadily to capture in his paintings the graphic immediacy of the action.

And, like Thomas, a score of Coast Guard combat artists are serving around the world, aboard every kind of fighting ship, to help tell the story of war. From the battle fronts their work is being rushed back to the United States to be shown to hundreds of thousands of civilians who have come to know and understand the war more acutely from these eye-witness works.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"Dear Sir: In behalf of Captain T. K. Bedayan, in France, and of Sgt. Louis J. Short, in Germany, may I express appreciation of a well-organized, entertaining, and satisfying Art Association Bulletin. Both men have eagerly asked for news of old friends and of the present activities of artists in this country. Your San Francisco Art Association Bulletin, which they are receiving through the courtesy of Miss Sullivan, at the California School of Fine Arts, answers their need for news of events and of people close to their hearts.

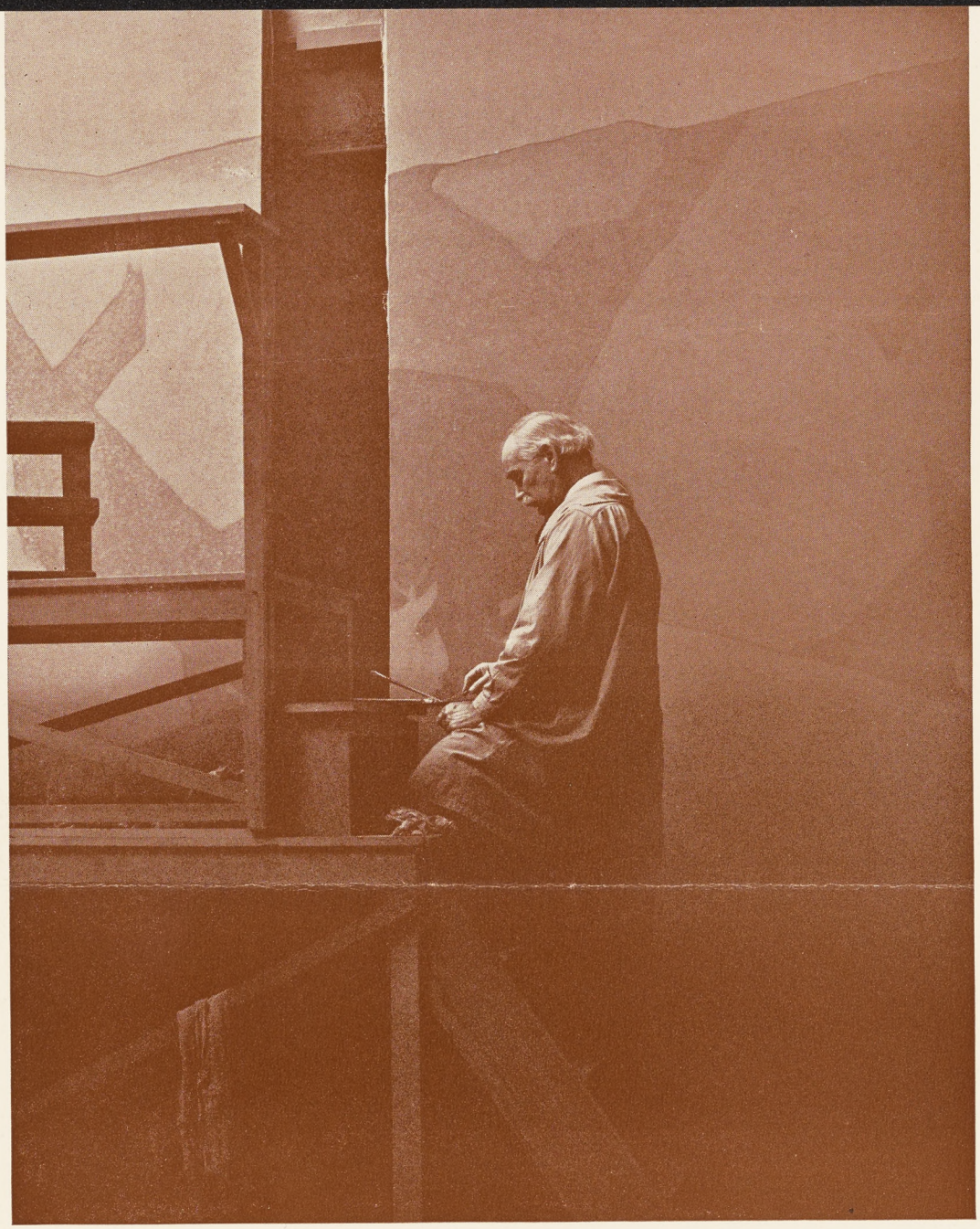
"Lots of luck to you and to your staff in your future work on the Bulletin!

Sincerely yours,

MARION SMITH,

6451 Florio Street, Oakland 11."

Thank you, Marion Smith. It is not our policy to publish complimentary letters but the first comment of any kind, pro or con, is an exception.



GOTTARDO PIAZZONI AT WORK ON MURAL FOR SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

GOTTARDO PIAZZONI

With deep regret your editor notes the death of Gottardo Piazzoni on August 1st at his ranch in the Carmel Valley. Mr. Piazzoni was an Honorary Life Member of this Association and served many years as a member of the Board of Directors.

Piazzoni was long a member of the faculty of the California School of Fine Arts. His daughter, Mirielle, and her husband, Mr. Philip Wood, were students of the School.

Mr. Piazzoni's murals in the San Francisco Public Library are known to thousands. As a painter he had a simple yet profound understanding of the California landscape. This, as revealed in his paintings, was perhaps best expressed verbally by his own words — "when it's in your heart, it's art."

ODDS AND ENDS

From China we have received word from Paul Quentin Forster, Active Artist Member of this Association and former instructor in Advertising Art at the California School of Fine Arts. He has sent us a program of an Army production of the current New York stage hit "Oklahoma," given at the Hangar Playhouse, "somewhere in China." We may mention that the talent is an amateur and professional mixture and is drawn from SOS, 14th Air Force, China Air Service Command; AACS Headquarters 63rd Group, and the American Red Cross. S/Sgt. Delbert Fernandez of Redding, California, who is credited with the stage sets, is a former student of the California School of Fine Arts (yes, it's in the program notes). He has done sets for many Army shows in China. His next assignment is to design murals for recreation halls throughout China.

While we are mentioning the School and the Army we'll include the address of a former student now in India, who will also be remembered for his frescos in the Bay Area. We are sure he will appreciate hearing from his old friends. S/Sgt. Gordon Langdon, 19138178, 342nd Service Squadron, APO 466 c/o Postmaster, New York.

The Oakland Art Gallery announces that the 1945 Annual Exhibition of Water Colors, Pastels, Drawing and Prints will be held from October 7th to November 4th. Deadline for entries is Sunday, September 23rd. Further information may be obtained from the Director, Oakland Art Gallery, Municipal Auditorium, Oakland 7, California.

Dorothy Wagner Puccinelli Cravath, who reviewed the California School of Fine Arts 1945 Annual Student Exhibition, was at one time a student of the School and has written criticism for California Arts and Architecture and other publications. She has been actively associated with the San Francisco Society of Women Artists and the San Francisco Art Association. She was at one time a member of the Artists' Council and served on juries for the Annual Exhibitions.

The Artists' Council at its meeting on August 10th nominated names for the painting and sculpture juries for the 1945 Annual Exhibition. Nominations included: Painting—Matthew Barnes, Jose Moya del Pino, Hal Goldman, Dorothy Grover, Leah Rinne Hamilton, Merlin Hardy, Margaret Peterson, Geneve Rixford Sargeant, Hassel W. Smith, and Clay Spohn. Sculpture—Brents Carlton, Ida Day Degen, Cecilia Graham, Robert Howard, Raymond Puccinelli, and Jan Sabre. The meeting was adjourned in memory of Helen Forbes and Gottardo Piazzoni.

ANNUAL STUDENT EXHIBITION

By Dorothy W. P. Cravath

This year's exhibition of students' work was a very good one, a splendid showing, in fact, considering handicaps due to the war. All the usual traditions were observed: Opening day, with the billowing, interwoven strips of bunting making a pleasant canopy overhead in the central court, the marigolds floating in the pool, the Alumni of various eras drinking tea and checking up on each other's careers and offspring, and, from time to time, looking at the exhibition.

The students' work shows a variety of influences as always, more pronounced this year, perhaps, because of the widely divergent personal styles of the various teachers. Inevitably, some students imitate, some rebel, some incorporate what they can use of the teacher's style with their own personal expression; all are molded in some way by the school environment. This year there seems to be not quite so much tendency to be influenced by the work of one or two outstanding students, as is usually the case.

The lithography class, for instance, shows work of almost as many styles as there are students represented. Elizabeth Mailliard's nuns in a landscape is a beautiful and quite professional use of line and mass in black, white and grays. Juliette Steele has several well done compositions of Fisherman's Wharf and Beach concessions, carried out principally in line. Alice Morris has a very freely drawn landscape in brush technique. Marilyn Miller has some good realistic illustration. Laural Hirschfield relies on movement and mass in her simply done turtle and a girl's head, carried out principally in grays.

In the painting classes, the crossroads tendency is evident too. Surrealism does not seem to be a discernible influence, but there are several chips off the old cube, Cezannes, Mackys, Gaws, McCrays, and a few canvasses somewhat Bracquish. Strangely enough, one of the prevailing influences seems to have been some of the paintings in the "They Taught Themselves" shows of recent years.

Most immediately impressive, in the painting group, are the large pictures by Laural Hirschfield of big eyed, white skinned, black haired nudes against bold patterned drapes and backgrounds. Although it is probably somewhat damaging to a student's development to achieve so personal and limited a style so soon, these, by reason of their posterish treatment and a certain intensity of expression, are, undoubtedly, very effective.

Juliette Steele seems to be doing some healthy experimenting with techniques. One of her canvasses is a palette knife painting, boldly done without shadows or modeling, of a tan building with a red roof against an ultramarine sky, and a fence with little red tops to the posts which are very brilliant against the bright green lawn. Another one is a flat, unmodeled still life with mat sandpaperish surface. It is bright and decorative.

Marny George has several abstractions. Miriam Burrell shows an almost flat pattern of little red-roofed houses in a Bay region landscape which is quite reminiscent of Hiler. There is a number of paintings of an old man done somewhat in the manner of Cezanne. Kenneth Forbes' and other oil sketches of a ballet dancer are in a well and favorably known tradition.

A glance at the still life section suggests a possible reason for the current apple shortage. Here are green apples done in a great variety of ways. These studies are for the most part good, some very good indeed, as is Elizabeth Mailliard's fine still life in which paint is used to create an impression of both solidity and brilliant color. There are in this section no dead areas of "just paint."

Bethel de Boie has an excellent still life of — naturally — more green apples. The apples of Betty Burley are painted without modeling, contrasting with others which are rounded and polished. Apples and all, the still life section seems unusually good. There is live color and very little mud in the paintings, and there is usually sound composition. In some there is excellent form.

Sculpture classes also seem to be filled with the desire to experiment. Apparently work in realistic modeling has gone on hand in hand with study of abstract planes suggested by the human figure—a sound idea in teaching. Some of the results are interesting and some rather strange. In the interesting category is a Picassoish multiple face in high relief. Several give the impression that the theory of abstract design has been imperfectly digested. An especially strange feature is the class-wide tendency to model extremely long, slim and breakable looking necks on abstract and realistic figures alike.

The Saturday classes' exhibits are full of the authentic self-expression of childhood, uncontaminated as a rule by preoccupations concerning styles and trends. There are most charming animals in clay and terra cotta, cats nursing kittens, a pelican with outspread wings, small elephants, dogs, a kid, a most convincing gorilla, a horse's head, and a tiny mother and child that suggest a creche. Older students made studies of soldiers and sailors, from life, in terra cotta clay. Most ambitious project in the sculpture class is a large dog in plaster by Rosslyn Sloss.

Children's work in color includes the usual battle scenes, landscapes, some very good pictures of people doing things, nurses at the Red Cross Blood Bank, charming clowns in water color, a few costume sketches, etc.

Of the more advanced students' work there are several excellent large oils, full of life and color, by Josephine Raymond, Raymond Bandar, Nancy Thompson, and others.

The popular pottery class exhibit is full of top notch stuff—bowls, bottles, plates of beautiful, simple shapes, fine craftsmanship, excellent glazes—which inspires beholders with an itch to own them.

San Francisco Art Association
BULLETIN
800 Chestnut San Francisco Calif

Sec. 562, P. L. & R.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Francisco, Calif.
Permit No. 3406

Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley
San Francisco Museum of Art
Civic Center
San Francisco 2, Calif.